

Albuquerque Journal - September 20, 2009

Hobbs News Sun - September 20, 2009

Ruidoso News - September 24, 2009

Carlsbad Current Argus - September 26, 2009

By Representative Harry Teague and T. Boone Pickens

As two life-long oil-and-gas men, who have also taken leadership roles in promoting energy independence through a focus on alternative fuels, we have something to say: America is importing too much oil.

Dependency on foreign oil is expensive, and it is dangerous. In July alone, we spent \$24 billion on 347 million barrels of imported oil. That's about two-thirds of the oil we needed to power our economy, meaning we as a nation are negotiating with dictators for our economic strength and national security.

So what's the solution? Well, we are developing our wind capacity in the Great Plains and our solar capacity in the Southwest. Those renewable sources can provide more than 20 percent of our electricity requirements, but 70 percent of the oil we use is as a transportation fuel. The oil is refined into gasoline to power our 250 million cars and light trucks, or diesel to power our 6.5 million over-the-road trucks. So unless we see major advances in battery technology, wind and solar are not helping you drive to work in the morning.

The only domestic resource available today to substitute for imported oil is domestic natural gas. The solution is clean, plentiful American natural gas.

We have an abundance of natural gas in the continental United States. One recent study indicated we have 2,000 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) in natural gas reserves; enough for about 118 years. Put another way, we have more energy in our natural gas reserves than all the energy stored in all the oil in Saudi Arabia.

Natural gas is a proven technology. Over 10 million cars and trucks around the world are natural gas vehicles. Of those, unfortunately, only about 130,000 are in the United States.

We must provide incentives to jump start the NGV industry in America. A bill currently moving through the U.S. House and Senate will do just that. H.R. 1835 — the NAT GAS Act — provides tax incentives for owners of trucks and other fleets to begin moving their vehicles from

imported gasoline and diesel to domestic natural gas and to open NGV fueling stations.

Another target of the NAT GAS Act are municipal, county and state vehicles; utility and express delivery trucks; municipal buses, and refuse and recycling trucks. All of these go back to the "barn" every night so they can easily, cheaply and efficiently be refueled at those central locations.

In addition to reducing our dependence on foreign oil, H.R. 1835 also will improve our environment. Natural gas burns much cleaner than either gasoline or diesel and produces virtually no particulate emissions. Anyone who has waited at the curb with their child for a diesel-burning school bus knows what we are talking about.

New Mexico in particular has an abundance of natural gas. It is an off-the-shelf technology which can, within a matter of months — not decades — begin to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. It is cleaner than gasoline or diesel. It is cheaper than imported oil. And it will keep precious American dollars in America rather than going to places like Venezuela, Saudi Arabia or Angola — three major suppliers of oil.

H.R. 1835 has 84 bi-partisan co-sponsors. That is an indication of how important the members of Congress think the problem of our dependence on imported is, and how vital this legislation is in helping to solve it. We hope the House leadership will bring H.R. 1835 to the floor for a vote as soon as possible.